

Sweet Home
Alabama

THE
Year of
ALABAMA
Makers



ALABAMA MAKERS



Alabama Inspired

BY ALABAMA TOURISM
DEPARTMENT STAFF

Get to know Alabama's innovative, artistic and industrious side as part of The Year of Alabama Makers.

Creative artisans, carvers, designers and cooks are scattered across Alabama, eager to share their hand-made treasures with visitors during 2016, The Year of Alabama Makers. Head for charming galleries and studios in cities, small towns and places off the beaten path to meet the makers and expand your collections of Americana.

What's included? Everything from Gee's Bend quilts to Billy Reid shirts, Mercedes sedans and all kinds of goods in between.

Visit www.alabama.travel and circle the dates of the dozens of festivals where you can purchase unique goods made in Alabama. Don't miss the curated Southern Makers shows filled with Alabama artists. Also, seek out manufacturing plants that open their doors for your family to tour. (Several food plants offer free samples, but the auto assembly plants do not.)





From fashion and food to fiction and music, Alabama boasts a legacy of influential local makers. It's clear the tradition continues.

Fabulous Fashion

Alabama is home to many outstanding and well-known fashion designers. **Billy Reid**, a Council of Fashion Designers of America award winner, designs luxury men's and women's clothing from his flagship shop and studio on North Court Street in Florence. Nearby, designer **Natalie Chanin** uniquely combines food and fashion. At The Factory and Café, she sells goods for the person and the home and offers delicious culinary delights as well.

You may have seen **Heidi Elnora** on the TLC reality show "Bride by Design." Her acclaimed wedding dress designs may be seen at her shop, Heidi Elnora Atelier, located in Birmingham.



Creating goods from sustainable products is the mission of **Joy Maples** and **Martin Ledvina** with Earth Creations. Among other things, their company creates Alabama Dirt Shirts using everything from Alabama that they can get their hands on. Earth Creations started out in Moulton and still has a plant there, but they also can be found in Bessemer.

Loyal Stricklin, located in Opelika, manufactures leather goods and creates everything from coasters and wallets to dog leashes and belts. Using a well-thought-out, simple design, the company carefully selects its materials to add character and beauty to every product in its cache, which also includes T-shirts, backpacks and purses.

Two events highlighting Alabama's fashion industry are **Birmingham Fashion Week**, held each spring, and **Mobile Fashion Week**, held in the fall.

Music Notables

In Muscle Shoals, discover why Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards called this northwest Alabama city "rock 'n roll heaven." Here, The Stones recorded one of their biggest hits, "Brown Sugar." When you visit, tour **FAME** recording studio. Later take your photo in front of the **Muscle Shoals Sound Studio** at 3614 Jackson Highway in Sheffield, just like Cher did for her album cover. These are just two locations that were featured in the documentary *Muscle Shoals*.

One of the greatest songs that captures the Muscle Shoals sound is Alabama-born Wilson Pickett's "Mustang Sally." Visit the nearby **Alabama Music Hall of Fame** in Tuscumbia for a celebration of the song's 50th anniversary and to see memorabilia from all of Alabama's notable music makers. The state also boasts a **Jazz Hall of Fame** in

CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT ◀ Billy Reid, Billy Reid Spring Fashion Line, Natalie Chanin, St. Paul and the Broken Bones. CLOCKWISE FROM FAR RIGHT ▶ Joy Maples & Martin Ledvina, Heidi Elnora and her wedding designs, Loyal Stricklin.

Birmingham and four other museums dedicated to individual music greats, including the **W.C. Handy Birthplace, Museum and Library** in Florence, **Hank Williams Boyhood Museum** in Georgiana, **Hank Williams Museum** in Montgomery and the **ALABAMA Fan Club and Museum** in Fort Payne.

While in Alabama, attend the **W.C. Handy Festival** in Florence, **Frank Brown Songwriters Festival** on the Alabama coast and **The Hangout Music Festival** in Gulf Shores. It is in local music halls and during festivals like these that groups such as Athens-based **Alabama Shakes**, whose soulful rock album *Sound & Color* debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200, and Birmingham-based **St. Paul and the Broken Bones**, a seven-piece soul band, developed its talent.

If you are looking to buy some Alabama music to take home, be sure to visit local record stores like **Pegasus** in Florence, **Charlemagne Record Exchange** and **Renaissance Records** in Birmingham, **Vertical House Records** in Huntsville, **Mobile Records** in Mobile, **Bay Sound** in Daphne, and **Dr. Music** in Fairhope.

Belly Fillers

From **Sister Schubert's** homemade rolls to pickles, jams and jellies produced from well-preserved family traditions, Alabama boasts a multiplicity of food products made right at home.

If you like syrup, then you'll love the deliciousness of **Alaga Syrup**, made in Montgomery and distributed in stores all over the country. In Headland, **Todd Farms**





brings a new perspective to the syrup-making business. The owners not only sell the product but demonstrate how pure sugar cane is turned into syrup. Browse the unique cane syrup museum they offer as well.

From syrup to sausage, you'll feel a true Southern connection when you sample Alabama's own **Conecuh Sausage**, a hickory-smoked product brand that began back in 1947 in Evergreen. Visit during the **Conecuh Sausage Festival** in October or check out Conecuh's retail store for flavorful sausages all year long.

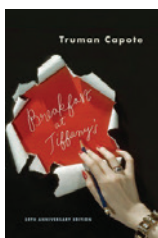
The **Overall Company** in Opelika is not your run-of-the-mill coffee house. It not only offers freshly roasted organic coffees and delicious blended teas, but its popsicles are a frosty delight. From the taste of salted caramel to lemonade-basil popsicles, you'll find yourself licking your lips for days.

The folks at **Sims Food** in Dadeville describe their product, **Wickles Pickles**, as "wickedly delicious and truly irresistible." Perhaps the secret lies in their 70-year-old family recipe that includes a custom blend of spices and other ingredients. You can order Wickles Pickles online or look for them in various retail outlets. To tame a sweet tooth, you'll want to get to know favorites like **Selma Good** in Selma, which makes some of the best cookies around, and **Granny Hester's Fine Foods** in Fort Payne, which sells Granny Hester's Sweet Potato Biscuits that can be found in more than 1,000 stores nationwide.

Want milk? Birmingham-based **Barber Dairies**, founded by George H. Barber, started in the 1930s and has been going strong ever since. Barber's milk, buttermilk, cottage cheese, dips and sour cream are sold under the Barber's brand throughout Alabama, the Florida Panhandle, southern Georgia, and the northern and southern portions of Mississippi. **Belle Chevre Goat Farm** in Elkmont offers a different look into the dairy farming business. This artisanal goat cheese-making operation was established in 1986 and acquired by current president Tasia Malakasis in 2007. Belle Chevre's product line includes classic goat cheese and fromage blanc as well as a quartet of sweet breakfast cheeses and more.

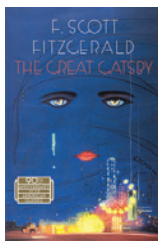


TOP TO BOTTOM ▲ Alabama Shakes lead singer Brittany Howard, a former letter carrier in Athens, has been honored by Billboard, Vogue, and Gov. Robert Bentley. After appearances on "Saturday Night Live" and Stephen Colbert's "The Late Show," the band embarked on a world tour to promote its second album "Sound & Color." Treats from The Overall Company. Sims Food's beloved Wickles Pickles, voted Alabama's favorite snack.



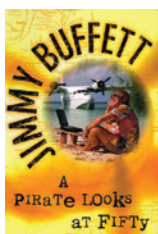
TRUMAN CAPOTE

Published in 1958, this novel has not gone out of style, thanks in large part to the verve of its likable main character Holly Golightly.



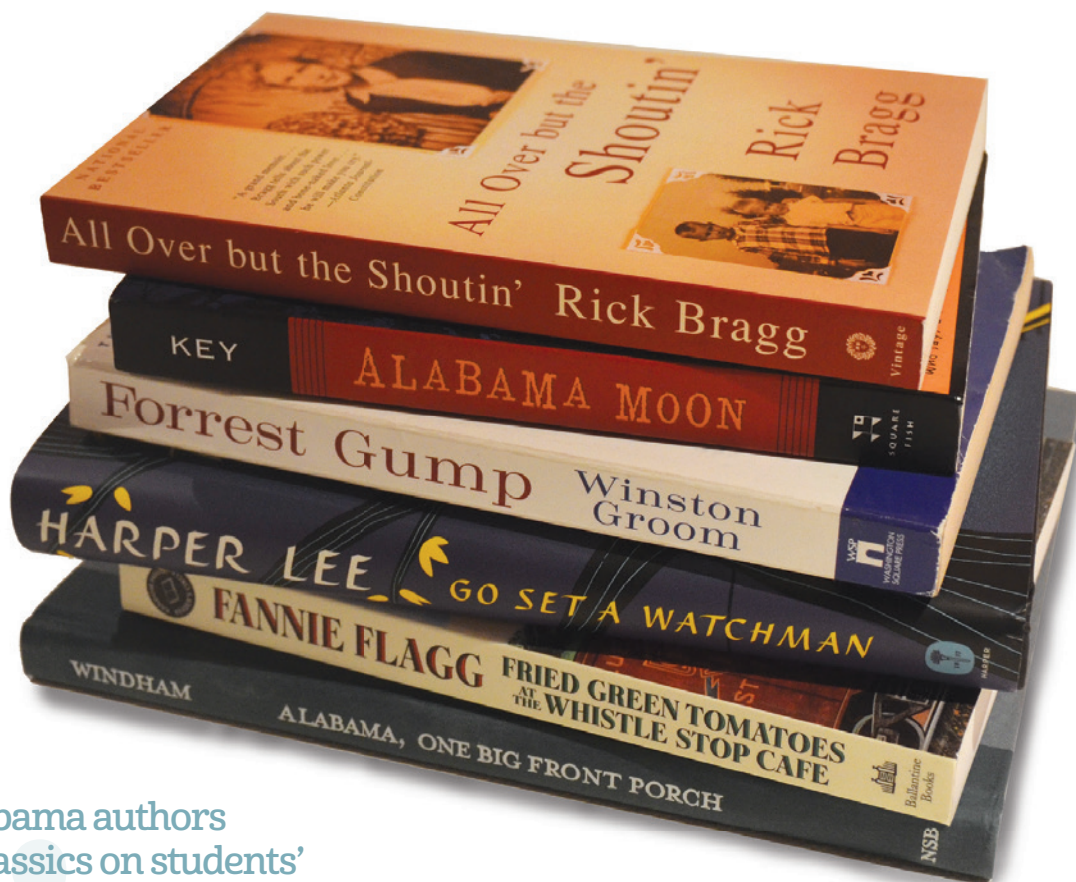
F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

This portrait of life in the Jazz Age endures as a classic rags-to-riches tale that shows it's not always so nice at the top.



JIMMY BUFFETT

The famous singer/songwriter shares behind-the-scenes stories of his life and a vacation he took to celebrate his landmark birthday.



Works by many Alabama authors have ended up as classics on students' required reading lists.

Coffee and tea lovers can enjoy **Red Diamond** or **Milo's Sweet Tea** in hotels and restaurants or pick up their favorites in local groceries. Both companies are based in Birmingham. **Piper and Leaf**, located in Huntsville, offers wonderful blends of gourmet teas made from local ingredients straight from the garden, farm, forest or briar patch. Find Piper and Leaf tea in loose leaf form in many local shops in and around Huntsville. If you're looking for a cup or jar of the delicious leaves, you can visit almost any farmers market in the area or stop by the Tea Shop located at Lowe Mill Center for the Arts.

For those who prefer a relaxing glass of wine or some delicious craft beer, spend the day along **Alabama's Wine Trail**, sampling everything

from traditional flavors to true Southern favorites like blueberry and muscadine wines, or stop by any one of a number of local breweries found throughout the state along the **Alabama Craft Beer Trail**.

Storytelling Stars

Successful writers come from every corner of the state and have produced works in every genre. Classics like Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Truman Capote's *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and *In Cold Blood* share bookshelves the world over with a host of other noted Alabama authors. Readers can enjoy the richly Southern *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café* by Fannie Flagg or head to where the water is warm and the drinks are cold in *Tales from Margaritaville* by Jimmy Buffett.

There is just something special about Monroeville. This small town has become known for producing multiple best-selling writers including Lee, Capote and *Crazy in Alabama* author Mark Childress. Lee and Capote grew up together in Monroeville, and the town inspired her 1960 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and her recently published best-selling novel, *Go Set a Watchman*. Several times each spring residents of Monroeville produce a two-act play version of *To Kill a Mockingbird* in the same historic courtroom that inspired the sets of the Academy Award-winning movie starring Gregory Peck.

Just 10 minutes outside of Birmingham is the small town of Irondale and the famous Irondale Café—the real-life inspiration for the Whistle Stop Café in Fannie Flagg's popular novel *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café*. Just like its fictional cousin, the Irondale Café is known for its fried green tomatoes, which are featured on the list of "100 Dishes to Eat in Alabama Before You Die."

A trip to Montgomery takes you to the F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald Museum—the only museum in the world dedicated to the memory of the Fitzgeralds. While living in Montgomery from the fall of 1931 through the spring of 1932, Scott worked on his novel *Tender Is the Night* and Zelda began her only novel, *Save Me the Waltz*. Their house on Felder Avenue, in the Old Cloverdale neighborhood of Montgomery, was preserved and



TOP TO BOTTOM ▼ Randy, Keith & Dylan Cochran from Wood Studio and the trio's Lookout Mountain Rocker, Jerry Brown Pottery.



Where will you find your one-of-a-kind item? Anywhere you look.

converted into the Fitzgerald Museum. Several special events are planned this year to celebrate the museum's 30th anniversary.

Bayou La Batre lies along the Mississippi Sound on the Gulf of Mexico, about 30 minutes outside of Mobile. Known as the Seafood Capital of Alabama, the town is also home to the fictional Bubba Gump Shrimp Company from the novel *Forrest Gump* by Mobile native Winston Groom. The town celebrates its fishing heritage with annual events, such as the Blessing of the Fleet and Taste of the Bayou.



There is nothing like relaxing on the white-sand beaches of Alabama's Gulf Coast, listening to the waves and enjoying a good book. Mobile native Jimmy Buffett is known for his music, but he is also a best-selling author. His *Tales from Margaritaville*, a collection of short stories, spent seven months on *The New York Times* best seller list. His autobiography, *A Pirate Looks at Fifty*, went straight to No. 1, making him one of the few authors to ever reach No. 1 one on both the fiction and nonfiction lists.

Crafty Creators

The talented individuals who use their hands to make art you will cherish can be found across Alabama. Brothers Dylan and Keith Cochran make chairs at **Wood Studio** in Arley (near Cullman). **Ernst Wardner Designs** constructs heirloom-quality, custom furniture in Gadsden. At the

Rail Studio in Montgomery, workers use reclaimed wood to create beautifully crafted furniture, and at **Southern Accents Architectural Antiques** in Cullman, you'll find just the right antique element to enhance your latest home design project. Celia Dionne, a textile expert who runs **Coastal Textile Center & Clara's Loom** near the coast in Bon Secour, allows visitors to watch as yarn is spun and woven into materials you'll just have to take home.

Along the way from north Alabama to the Gulf Coast, pull over at **Orr Park**, situated near Shoal Creek in Montevallo. Here among the ancient cedar trees, local artist Tim Tingle has carved dragons, wizened men and other enchanting creatures into the trees that line the walking trail. You will also find potters plying their craft—from **Jerry Brown** in Hamilton, noted for his "ugly" jugs, and **Tena Payne** of Earthborn

Studios, who supplies the Hot & Hot Fish Club in Birmingham with their unique dishes, to **Pottery By Williams** in Monroeville, where you can watch Sam Williams making a variety of handcrafted pieces, and **Tom Jones Pottery** in Fairhope.

Glass-blowing artists can be found in Fort Payne at **Orbix Hot Glass** and also at **The Hot Shop** at The Coastal Arts Center of Orange Beach. Jake Carnley created the **Great Bear Wax Co.** in Birmingham. He says that the inspiration behind each scented candle stems from his memories and passions that include the outdoors and nature.

You can view works by a number of other crafters in

west Alabama. **Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center** in Camden features potholders and quilts made by the **Gee's Bend Quilters**, a group of women who have become world-renowned for their artistic elements and unique quilting designs. Visit **HERObike** in Greensboro, where they make bicycles out of bamboo they grow.

The **Rural Studio**, located mainly in Hale County in west Alabama, is an undergraduate program of the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture at Auburn University. *The New York Times* has featured the students' designs, ranging from houses and parks to a fire station and more.

Equestrian lovers will want to seek out **The Saddle Guy** in Grady, just south of Montgomery. There, Kevin Parrish handcrafts leather saddles that are a treat for the eyes whether you ride horses or not.

Collective Collaborators

Art in Alabama is flourishing. From the large cities of Huntsville and Birmingham to the small towns of Mentone and Fairhope, artists are changing the cultural landscape of the state. Arts festivals are bringing thousands of visitors into the state, and downtown areas of cities are being reimagined as artistic community centers.

Mentone, on Lookout Mountain in the northeastern corner of the state, is one such community, brimming with antiques stores, arts and crafts shops, galleries and restaurants. **The Log Cabin Village Shops** here offer a large selection of pottery, art, antiques, gourmet coffee and more. **The Wildflower Café** in the center of town is a great local hangout with delicious food and walls lined with local art for sale.

Huntsville harbors **Panoply**, one of the premier arts festivals in the Southeast. The event is held every April in Huntsville's Big Spring Park and includes a broad range of



CLOCKWISE ► HERObike's Cruiser Bamboo Bike & Beacon Alley Bamboo Skateboard, Great Bear Wax Co.'s Wooden No 1 11.5-oz. candle.



Turn your ear, turn an eye, turn your taste buds. Alabama makers create a mix of items that make life better and more interesting.

exhibits, performances and hands-on activities. Panoply features dance, drama and musical performances from local and touring groups.

Pepper Place in downtown Birmingham is a complex of several buildings, anchored by the historic Dr. Pepper bottling company. This venue has become the city's design, furniture and arts-related merchandise hub with galleries, shops, boutiques and a seasonal farmers market. The **Bluff Park Art Show**, held in Birmingham the first Saturday of October, features works from visual artists from around the state and nation. Proceeds from this event support the arts in greater Birmingham, including the funding of public art by local artists.

A trip south takes you to the beautiful resort town of Fairhope, known for its charming downtown lined with





interesting galleries and shops. The **Fairhope Arts & Crafts Festival** each March brings in more than 200 exhibitors and their best works to this prestigious juried show. The three-day festival attracts more than 200,000 visitors and celebrates its 64th anniversary this year.

Birmingham artist **Lonnie Holly's** works include paintings, recycled found-object sculptures and music. **Thornton Dial** grew up in rural Emelle to become a self-taught artist whose paintings, sculptures and drawings are noted for their raw creative power. Works by these two Alabama folk artists have been exhibited at art galleries across the country.

Standard Deluxe in Waverly, **Yellow Hammer Creative** in Birmingham and **Cotton & Pine Creative** in Montgomery offer a different twist on the Alabama makers scene. Standard Deluxe is a design and silk screening print shop with a music component, while Yellow Hammer develops logo/branding, album art, posters and garment printing. Cotton & Pine labels itself as a group of designers, documentarians, writers, photographers,

printers, artists, craftsmen and storytellers who create everything from print design and video to custom letterpress printing using a century-old printer. They also have an in-house shop that sells a line of ready-made paper goods.

Manufacturing Makers

When **Mercedes** located to Vance in Tuscaloosa County, it was the first automotive company to locate in Alabama. Several models of Mercedes are assembled there. Visit the town of Lincoln and watch **Honda** Pilots and Ridgelines roll off the assembly line. The best-selling **Hyundai** Sonata is assembled in Montgomery, and the plant is open for tours. Visitors can see what it takes to make these award-winning vehicles.

We went for a tour in the Birmingham [Golden Flake] factory today, and the kids loved it! —Amanda Dickenson Gillam



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT ◀ Tangled String Studios' Danny Davis Acoustic Instruments, artist Lonnie Holly, Milo's Famous Sweet Tea, Cotton & Pine, Golden Flake, Priester's Pecans, Selma Good's Robert Armstrong, Earthborn Studios.

Red Bay is home to **Tiffin Motorhomes**, where you can see craftsmen construct a home away from home.

Sample a warm chip fresh off the line at the **Golden Flake** factory in Birmingham. After you've satisfied your salty cravings, take your sweet tooth on a tour of Cookieland at **Bud's Best Cookies**, which are baked just a few miles away.

Blue Bell Creamery in Sylacauga offers tours which include a walk overlooking the production area and a serving of that famous ice cream. The Priester family in Fort Deposit has been treating folks to its pecans and candies for more than 70 years at **Priester's Pecans**. You can watch the candy being made in its facility along Interstate 65.



10 Fun Ways to Celebrate The Year of Alabama Makers

The Annual Fairhope Arts and Crafts Festival (March 18-20, Fairhope) - features more than 230 exhibitors who bring their best works from all over the country, including many from the Southeast, to showcase at this prestigious juried show. Free admission. 251-928-6387; www.annualartsandcraftsfestivalfairhope.com.

Old 280 Boogie (April 16, Waverly) is not your run of the mill music festival. The Standard Deluxe Company where it takes place bills it as a "little bit folk art, little bit rock-n-roll." The Boogies assemble great Southern musical acts and put them on a stage that is built under a shed out in the yard. Admission charged. 334-826-6423; www.standarddeluxe.com.

Panoply (April 29-May 1, Huntsville) is the Southeast's premier arts weekend where Huntsville's innovative spark shines through a festival of art, music and more in downtown's Big Spring Park. There are activities for both children and adults. There is an admission charge except to those 12 and under. 256-519-ARTS (2787); www.artshuntsville.org/panoply-arts-festival.

Magic City Art Connection (April 22-24, Birmingham) is Birmingham's largest festival. It transforms Linn Park into a wonderland of excitement with its blast of fresh artistic talent, sights, sounds, tastes, and aromas. The festival spotlights 200 artists. Free admission. 205-595-6306; www.magiccityart.com.

Southern Makers (April 30-May 1, Montgomery) is an annual event that celebrates creativity and innovation by bringing together highly curated, handpicked top talent who "make" music, designs, buildings, farms, art, food, beer, clothing, soap, tea, coffee and everything in between, including architecture, fashion and repurposed items. There is an admission charge. www.southernmakers.com.

The Black Belt Folk Roots Festival (August 27-28, Eutaw) is a unique celebration that brings together craftspeople, musicians, dancers, storytellers, food specialists, artists and others who celebrate the traditions and folkways of the West Alabama region. The festival is held at the Historic Greene County Courthouse Square. www.alblackbeltheritage.org.

Southern Makers (September 10-11, Birmingham) branches out from its Montgomery home and heads to Sloss Furnaces in Birmingham. Sloss is a National Historic Landmark and is the perfect venue to welcome crafters and artisans from across the state and region. The weekend will be a celebration of Southern creativity and innovation. There is an admission charge. www.southernmakers.com.

Bluff Park Art Show (October 1, Hoover) takes place on the first Saturday in October. Held for more than 50 years, the show has grown from 65 artists to more than 150, and attracts more than 40,000 people annually. Admission is free. 205-822-0078; www.bluffparkartassociation.org/bluff-park-art-show.

Kentuck Festival of the Arts (October 15-16, Northport) features more than 270 nationally and internally acclaimed folk, visionary and contemporary artists and expert craftspeople presenting their works along with free hands-on art-making activities for children, music, and interactive live demonstrations by basketmakers, blacksmiths, woodworkers, potters, fiber and fabric artists, quilters, jewelers and more. Admission charged. 205-758-1257; www.kentuck.org.

50th Annual Pike Road Arts & Crafts Fair (November 5, Pike Road) – is one of the oldest crafts fairs in Alabama featuring more than 250 artists and craftspeople. Held on the grounds of the historic Marks House (circa 1825). Admission charged; children under 8 free. www.pikeroadartandcraftsfair.com.

A more complete event listing is available at www.alabamamakers.com

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